

PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT 08/17/05

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES
MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR CAMP BULLIS, TEXAS**

Prepared By

Directorate of Safety, Environment
And Fire
Fort Sam Houston, Texas

August 2005

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
ENDANGERED SPECIES
MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR
CAMP BULLIS, TEXAS**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE ENDANGERED SPECIES MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR CAMP BULLIS, TEXAS**

SUMMARY

The US Army has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the implementation of the Endangered Species Management Plan for Camp Bullis, Texas. Based on the following summary of effects (and as discussed in the accompanying EA), the US Army has determined that the Proposed Action (as described below and in Section 1.0 of the EA) is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

INTRODUCTION

This EA, prepared pursuant to the NEPA and 32 CFR Part 651, Environmental Analysis of Army Actions; Final Rule, dated 29 March 2002, evaluates existing impacts of the ESMP. Both the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations that implement NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508) and 32 CFR Part 651 (which implements the CEQ regulations within the Army) provide for periodic review of continuing activities to ensure that the setting, actions, and effects previously described and analyzed remain substantially accurate. This is particularly important if changes to those actions have occurred or are planned.

BACKGROUND

The mission of the Army on Camp Bullis, Texas is to provide effective and realistic training for medical and other personnel from all branches of the U.S. Armed forces and Federal, State, and local law enforcement. The leadership of the Army and Camp Bullis recognize that to fulfill long-term mission requirements, the installation must achieve environmental objectives of sustainability of training lands and full compliance with conservation requirements under Federal and state law and (AR 200-3, Natural Resources-Land, Forest and Wildlife Management, Chapter 11). Camp Bullis is committed to maintaining its role as a leader in conservation of threatened and endangered species on its lands.

Endangered species surveys and monitoring on Camp Bullis were initiated in 1989 for the black-capped vireo (BCV) (*Vireo atricapillus*). Monitoring and survey efforts for endangered species were extended to the golden-cheeked warbler (GCW) (*Dendroica chrysoparia*) in 1990. From 1989 to the present, additional surveys have been conducted on Camp Bullis to document flora and fauna of the installation. These include extensive surveys for rare and endemic cave-inhabiting species initiated in 1994. In December 2000, nine Bexar County invertebrates were listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and

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Wildlife Service (USFWS). Three of these Federally listed endangered invertebrates have been found in 23 caves on Camp Bullis. They include two Rhadine beetles (Rhadine exilis and Rhadine infernalis ewersi) and one meshweaver, Madla's Cave Meshweaver (Cicurina madla).

PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action as addressed in this EA is the implementation of the ESMP in order to support U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) conservation and recovery objectives for listed populations occurring on installation lands and provide adequate flexibility for accomplishment of military mission-essential tasks.

A biological assessment of this proposed action has been submitted to the USFWS in compliance with Section 7 requirements of the Endangered Species Act. USFWS issued a final biological opinion on 28 Jul 05. The biological opinion is included in this analysis by reference where applicable.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Two alternatives are considered in this environmental assessment including (1) the "No Action" alternative, which provides the baseline for assessing effects of the preferred alternative and (2) the Army's preferred alternative of implementing the proposed installation ESMP.

No Action: This alternative provides the baseline for assessing effects of the preferred alternative on Camp Bullis. This alternative was rejected as it would not meet requirements found in Federal laws, Army regulations, and the USFWS recovery plans.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

Biological Resources: No significant impacts are anticipated.

Physical Environment: No significant impacts are expected to occur.

Cultural Resources: No significant impacts are expected to occur.

Socioeconomic Resources: No negative impacts are anticipated.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY

A draft EA and FONSI and the ESMP are available for public review and comment at the following locations: Public Affairs Office, Building 124, 1212 Stanley Road, Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234; Fort Sam Houston Library, Building 1222, 2601 Harney, Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234; and the San Antonio Public Library, 600 Soledad Plaza, San Antonio, TX 789205.

All interested agencies, groups and individuals are invited to submit written comments on the EA and FONSI to the address listed below within 30 days of the date of the Notice of Availability.

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Public Affairs Office
Attn: Mr. Phil Reidinger
Bldg 124
1212 Stanley Road
Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234

CONCLUSION

No cumulative impacts are expected from the implementation of the installation ESMP. Based on the findings of this environmental assessment, no significant environmental impacts would occur from the Proposed Action. Therefore, an issuance of a FONSI is warranted and an environmental impact statement is not required.

WENDY L. MARTINSON
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Commanding

DATE

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This environmental assessment (EA) provides an analysis of the environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects of implementation of the proposed “Endangered Species Management Plan (ESMP) for Camp Bullis, Texas; FY04-08.” The proposed action is an initiative of Fort Sam Houston and Camp Bullis to meet requirements of Army Regulation (AR) 200-3, Natural Resources-Land, Forest and Wildlife Management (Chapter 11) and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. This environmental assessment is provided in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

Two alternatives are considered in this EA including (1) the “No Action” alternative, which provides the baseline for assessing effects of the preferred alternative and (2) the Army’s preferred alternative of implementing the proposed installation ESMP.

A biological assessment of this proposed action was submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in compliance with Section 7 requirements of the ESA. USFWS issued a final biological opinion on 28 Jul 05. The biological opinion is included in this analysis by reference where applicable.

1.2 Need for the Proposed Action

The proposed action is implementation of the “Endangered Species Management Plan (ESMP) for Camp Bullis, Texas; FY04-08.” AR 200-3, Chapter 11 requires Army installations to develop endangered species management plans with a 5-year term of implementation. Key elements of this Army requirement are that installation ESMP’s must (1) support USFWS conservation and recovery objectives for listed populations occurring on installation lands, and (2) provide adequate flexibility for accomplishment of military mission-essential tasks.

The Army and Camp Bullis have the dual responsibility to maintain readiness of soldiers to fight and win conflicts on terms favorable to the United States and its allies, as well as to comply with environmental regulations through stewardship of lands under the Army’s management. Development of installation ESMPs is the mechanism to achieve balance between the Army’s primary readiness mission and environmental stewardship for threatened or endangered species.

1.3 Alternatives

Alternatives to the proposed action were developed from meetings and correspondence among representatives of Fort Sam Houston, Camp Bullis, and the USFWS. Results of this scoping process resulted in two alternatives. These alternatives considered in detail include (1) the “No Action” alternative which provides the baseline for assessing effects of the preferred alternative and (2) the Army’s preferred alternative of implementing the proposed installation ESMP. The proposed ESMP is included in this environmental assessment by reference.

1.3.1 Alternative 1 (no action): Continue current operations.

Alternative 1 does not adequately address necessary conservation actions. Continued operations under Alternative 1 also do not explicitly define population/habitat objectives consistent with published USFWS recovery objectives for listed species occurring on Camp Bullis. The “no action” alternative also does not adequately integrate military mission requirements on Camp Bullis in the context of established population goals. Continuing current operations will not meet compliance requirements under Section 7 of the ESA or AR 200-3 and will, potentially, compromise the Army’s mission to adequately train and prepare troops on Camp Bullis.

1.3.2 Alternative 2 (preferred alternative): Implement proposed “Endangered Species Management Plan for Camp Bullis, Texas; FY04-08.”

Key features of the proposed ESMP representing changes from the baseline “no action” alternative would:

- Sustain sufficient habitat and populations to meet or exceed current USFWS recovery goals for these species for the BCV and GCW.
- Provide specific incidental take limitations consistent with recovery goals for the BCV and GCW.
- Preserve and protect listed karst species and species of concern and their habitat in perpetuity, within the limits possible through the caves, land, and authority of Camp Bullis and its operational and mission requirements.
- Ensure the karst species survival, genetic diversity, and evolution in a manner consistent with the delisting or downlisting of endangered and threatened karst species as recognized by the USFWS (1994) recovery plan for related listed species in the Austin, Texas area.
- Provide necessary flexibility to achieve mission essential objectives

1.4 Scope

The scope of this environmental assessment is limited to assessing the environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic effects on Camp Bullis resulting from implementing the proposed installation ESMP. No other Federal or private lands will be subject to conditions of implementing the proposed Camp Bullis ESMP.

1.5 ESMP Development and Public Involvement

Endangered species surveys and monitoring on Camp Bullis were initiated in 1989 for the black-capped vireo (BCV) (*Vireo atricapillus*). Monitoring and survey efforts for endangered species were extended to the golden-cheeked warbler (GCW) (*Dendroica chrysoparia*) in 1990. From 1989 to the present, additional surveys have been conducted on Camp Bullis to document flora and fauna of the installation. These include extensive surveys for rare and endemic cave-inhabiting species initiated in 1994. In December 2000, nine Bexar County invertebrates were listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Three of these Federally listed endangered invertebrates have been found in 23 caves on Camp Bullis. They include two Rhadine beetles (*Rhadine exilis* and *Rhadine infernalis ewersi*) and a spider, Madla's Cave Meshweaver (*Cicurina exilis*).

In February 1995, the Army issued regulations requiring installations to develop Endangered Species Management Plans (ESMP) (AR 200-3, Chapter 11). Camp Bullis began preparing a draft plan in 1996 for submittal to the Army and the USFWS in compliance with the Army regulation. In 1997, significant data gaps were identified and development of the ESMP was put on hold. From 1997 to the present, extensive surveys for soils, vegetation, geology and data gathering efforts for other species, including the karst invertebrates were completed to fill these data gaps. Work on the ESMP was reinitiated in late 2002 incorporating all data and resulting in the draft ESMP. In addition to the above, a "Management Plan for the Conservation of Rare and Endangered Karst Species, Camp Bullis, Bexar and Comal Counties, Texas" (karst management plan) was completed in December 2002. This plan represents the cumulative efforts of Camp Bullis to eliminate, mitigate, and prevent harm to four federally or state-listed species and 15 rare but unlisted species of concern. All of the species are troglobites known only from caves and related karst voids, and all but the state-listed species (*Eurycea tridentifera*) are invertebrates. This karst management plan was memorialized in a Memorandum of Understanding between Fort Sam Houston and the USFWS on December 20, 2002. The karst management plan is incorporated into the ESMP.

1.6 Environmental Policy

NEPA (42 USC 4321 et seq.), as implemented by the regulations promulgated by the President's CEQ (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508, established national policy, sets goals, and provides the means to prevent or eliminate damage to the environment. NEPA

procedures ensure that the information about environmental impacts is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made on major federal actions. The policy states that the federal government shall use all practical means to preserve the productive harmony of the environment while fulfilling the social, economic, and other requirements of generations of Americans. Included in preserving the environment is the preservation of important historic and cultural aspects of national heritage.

Executive Order (EO) 11514, Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality, as amended by EO 11991, sets the policy for directing the federal government in providing leadership in protecting and enhancing the quality of the nation's environment.

EO 12898, Environmental Justice, mandates that all Federal agencies, to the greatest extent possible and permitted by law, make achieving environmental justice part of their mission by identifying and addressing as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States and its territories and possessions.

2. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A description of Camp Bullis and installation land use activities is provided in Chapter 2 of the ESMP and is included in this EA by reference. Chapter 2 describes the known landscape and habitat attributes of Camp Bullis, military training activities, and other non-military land use activities.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL, CULTURAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC EFFECTS

This section discloses anticipated environmental, cultural and socioeconomic effects anticipated from implementation of the proposed Camp Bullis ESMP. Alternative 1 (no action) provides the baseline for assessing effects of implementation of the preferred alternative.

Environmental, cultural and socioeconomic values considered in this assessment include:

- Biological
 - Threatened or endangered species
 - Habitat quality
 - Biodiversity
- Physical Environment
 - Air quality
 - Soils

- Water quality
- Cultural Resources
 - Archaeology
 - Historic preservation
- Socioeconomic
 - Recreation
 - Noise
 - Economic

3.1 Biological Resources

Threatened or endangered species

The Camp Bullis ESMP and companion biological opinion disclose anticipated effects of the preferred alternative on endangered species on Camp Bullis, Texas. These analyses of anticipated effects are incorporated here by reference.

In summary, the biological opinion of the proposed ESMP concludes that implementation is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the golden-cheeked warbler, black-capped vireo and the three cave species. The USFWS biological opinion provides reasonable and prudent measures and incidental take limits to avoid adverse effects on endangered populations on the installation.

Habitat quality and biodiversity

Habitat protection measures and management policies implemented under the proposed ESMP will assist in maintaining the high level of habitat quality and biodiversity currently found on Camp Bullis. No adverse impacts on habitat quality or biodiversity are anticipated under the preferred alternative.

3.2 Physical Environment: *Air quality, Soils, Water quality*

No activities prescribed in the proposed ESMP are anticipated to adversely affect air quality, soils or water quality. Measures to protect habitats in the vicinity of karst features on the installation may assist in maintaining ground water quality on the installation. Maintenance of endangered species habitats will assist in stabilizing soils and maintaining water quality. Future construction of firebreaks on the installation may result in limited soil disturbance; however, maintenance of herbaceous cover on these firebreaks will minimize erosion potential.

3.3 Cultural Resources

Archaeological

Ground clearing activities associated with construction of firebreaks will require clearance by the installation archaeologist to avoid potential impacts on significant cultural sites. No other surface or subsurface disturbance is anticipated from implementing the proposed ESMP.

Historic Preservation

No adverse impacts on historic structures or other historically significant sites are anticipated from implementation of the preferred alternative on lands subject to the proposed ESMP.

3.4 Socioeconomic

Recreation

No adverse impacts on recreation are anticipated from implementation of the preferred alternative on lands subject to the proposed ESMP.

Construction

No commercial construction is conducted on Camp Bullis lands subject to conditions of the proposed ESMP so no adverse impacts are anticipated. Restrictions in the proposed ESMP on military construction in endangered species habitats under remains unchanged from current baseline restriction. Military construction will require Section 7 consultation with the USFWS.

Noise

No cumulative increase in noise sources are anticipated under the proposed ESMP.

Economic

No commercial development, crop agricultural or commercial forestry are conducted on lands subject to the ESMP so no adverse economic impacts are anticipated.

3.5 CUMULATIVE EFFECTS AND CONCLUSION

No significant cumulative adverse effects on biological, cultural or socioeconomic resources are anticipated from implementation of the preferred alternative. Implementation of the preferred alternative will maintain progressive biological management of endangered species on Camp Bullis while maintaining the Army's ability to effectively train. Additional monitoring, research, and mitigation requirements under

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the proposed ESMP will provide mechanisms to recognize, evaluate, and rectify any adverse effects before cumulative, irreversible impacts occur.

Camp Bullis lands currently support populations of endangered BCVs, GCWs , and three karst invertebrates as well as other sensitive and rare biological resources. Achieving recovery objectives under the proposed ESMP will be a significant step toward supporting regional recovery objectives for these endangered species. Achieving these objectives will provide Camp Bullis the greatest flexibility in achieving its military mission in compliance with regulatory requirements under the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act.

4.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

Capacity	Name
Project Manager	Jackie Schlatter
Peer Review	Jerry Thompson
Q/A/Legal Review	Rod Hudson

5. PERSONS AND AGENCIES CONTACTED

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6.0 REFERENCES SITED

US Army. 2003. Draft Endangered Species Management Plan for Camp Bullis; FY 04-08.

Veni, George. 2002. Management Plan for the Conservation of Rare and Endangered Karst Species, Camp Bullis, Bexar and Comal Counties, Texas.